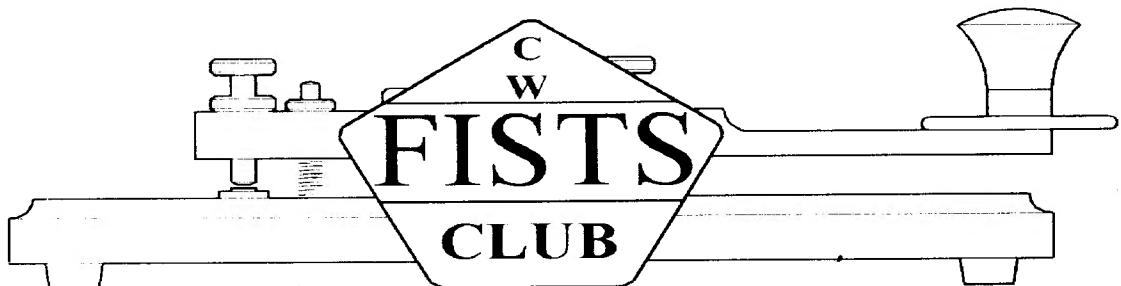


The Keynote

Newsletter of FISTS CW Club, the active chapter of the
International Morse Preservation Society

"Accuracy Transcends Speed"



- Further the use of CW
- Encourage newcomers to use CW
- Engender friendships among members

"When You've Worked A FISTS, You've Worked A Friend"

North KEYNOTE American

Slow Traffic Net: Tuesday & Thursday 9pm EST on 3.682

Slow Ragchewing Group: W8BI 8pm EST Wed on 3.720

Century Award Net: Sunday 1900Z (1500est/edt) on 14.058MHz

Saturday QSO Groups: 14.058 at 2000Z and 7.058 at 2300Z

Sunday Slow Speed Chat 21.158MHz at 1700Z

Please keep watch on the Novice Bands and frequencies ending in .x58

Accuracy Transcends Speed

Courtesy At All Times

Hello FISTS! Once again, I am going to have to cut the text of this issue short. The FCC proposal has been made public and I want to get as much of that info to you as I can. Even though FISTS was not formed to be a political activist club, it is important that our individual members do what they can to make their voices heard, specially when it comes to the preservation of Morse code. The FCC is asking for our input, so let's not pass up the opportunity to give it to them.

Writing to the FCC is not a simple matter of jotting down a note and mailing it or whooshing off an Email. There is a procedure and protocol to follow, which is quite tedious and complicated. But it insures that your comments will be read and given consideration. In the next Keynote I will go over, in detail, how you need to put together your letter to the FCC to make sure it goes to the right people.

The deadline for comments is December 1, so there isn't any rush. This will give you time to think about your response. Next month, I'll print some of the comments I've been getting (and there have been a LOT of them, thank you!) to give you some more perspectives on the situation and some food for thought. Thankfully, the FCC proposal isn't as drastic and damaging to Morse code as the ARRL proposal.

FISTS 11th Anniversary is in September and to celebrate we are announcing two new Awards, The Mobile Century and the Rag Chewer Awards. Thanks to Grant K2ACW for his assistance with the Mobile. And thanks to Joe, N3LBC, for not complaining when approached with the idea of more Awards, hi. Rules for the new awards are in this issue of the Keynote. I hope you enjoy working toward these Awards.

Don't forget to mark your calendar for the FISTS Fall Sprint! It's the second Saturday of October, 1700Z to 2100Z. Rules will be in the next Keynote and in the major magazines. This is a very enjoyable and popular event, so I hope you can join in!

You'll notice I've included two more photopages on the inside cover of this issue. We have one more ready, plus a roster for next month. It takes 32 photos to make one photo page so if no one sends in their photo, it can take a long time to make a page! So please take a minute to dig out a photo of yourself, where your face is about the same size as these photos (we can't resize them) and send it to Ken W8ROG at the address on the How Do I...page. *If you send in your photo, you'll be included in our Photo of the Month drawing with a prize of FISTS supplies! This month's winner is W6DHP, Bill #2186.*

I'd like to apologize to John Shannon K3WWP and his readers for having to leave out his column two months in a row. I'll make it up next month by running two of them.

I had to redo this issue to fit in the FCC proposal, so once again, I was unable to put everything I wanted to this month, but on the bright side, that gives me a head start on Issue #20! Congratulations

To Jim, KU4EA, #3007 on his upgrade to Extra!
To Ben, KD5CRI, #4919 on his upgrade to Advanced!
To Don, KD4RHH, #4472 on his upgrade to Extra!
To Ralph, AA3RI, #5066 on his upgrade to Extra!
To Andreas, AD6FQ, #4961 on the upgrade from General to Extra in 3 weeks!
To Mike KU4TZ on passing his Advanced and 20 wpm!

HOW DO I...

...ORDER CLUB SUPPLIES? Irene WO8E 44609 N. Bunker Hill Dr. Clinton Twp, MI 48038 has gold logo stickers, 200 for \$5; Blue enamel/gold metal clasp-back logo pins \$2.50; Cloth logo patches 3" octagon shaped \$1.50 Rubber stamps with the FISTS logo for use with an ink pad (not included) for \$5. "I Support KNOW Code" buttons for .75 FISTS Logo mugs are currently out of stock. These prices DO include first class postage. PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO FISTS CW CLUB.

...GET AN UP-TO-DATE MEMBERLIST? The list is printed in the KeyNote twice a year and is also on the Web page. A printed updated list may be obtained by sending \$1 (to defray costs- it's 14 pages long) to Ed N7CFA 2628 Lilac Street, Longview WA 98632. Corrections to Ed at n7cfa@kalama.com

...GET ON THE FISTS ON-LINE Email LIST? Send your Email address with your name/call/FISTS number to blafont@tir.com

...GET/SEND FISTS QSL CARDS Via BURO? Stan K4UK, with the assistance of the Franklin County Amateur Radio Club handles FISTS QSL bureau. Sort your outgoing FISTS cards by call area, and mail to K4UK, 1020 Long Island Dr, Moneta VA 24121. To receive cards you may have waiting at the bureau, send K4UK a few SASEs. QSLs will NOT be sent to you unless you have sent in an SASE or made arrangements with Stan. His Email is stanreas@rev.net

...RENEW MY KEYNOTE SUBSCRIPTION? Send a check/M.O. made out to FISTS for \$15/year to Nancy WZ8C POBox 47 Hadley MI 48440. What's the Family Plan? All CW folks at the same QTH can belong to FISTS for one subscription fee of \$15. You will each have your own FISTS number, but only one Keynote will be mailed per address. Student rate = \$10 if not in a Family Plan.

...SPONSOR A DX FISTS? DX FISTS have a separate block of numbers; their Keynote is mailed from Geo G3ZQS. Send their info to Geo 119 Cemetery Rd, Darwen Lancs, BB3 2LZ; he'll send them a DX application.

...HAVE AN APPLICATION OR NEWSLETTER SAMPLE SENT TO FRIENDS? Send their address Joe K5HLR 29 Melrose Dr, Marrero LA, 70072. Pse enclose \$1 if sample Keynote is requested. An application is also available, in text format, for downloading on our Web page <http://www.FISTS.org>

...APPLY FOR THE CENTURY or WAS AWARD? Send a list of contacts (call, FISTS #, date, band) and power used to Joe N3LBC, 222 E Bertsch St, Lansford PA 18232. Don't submit QSLs. There is no charge to FISTS members for the regular Century Award. If you are applying for the Golden/Diamond Century or the Platinum, send your request directly to HQ in England (119 Cemetery Rd, Darwen Lancs England BB3 2LZ) including sufficient return postage.

...VOLUNTEER FOR or GET A CODE BUDDY? send your requirements and info to John W9EM, 34020 N. Hickory Ave, Grayslake IL60030. Email to w9em@aol.com

...SHARE COMPUTER SOFTWARE? Joe WZ8U 5428 Bolander Grand Blanc MI 48439

...GET MY PHOTO ON THE PHOTOPAGES? Send a snapshot of yourself to Ken W8ROG 44609 N. Bunker Hill Dr. Clinton Twp, MI 48038

...GET A COPY OF FISTS PRESENTATION Contact Joe KK5NA at KK5NA@quadj.com or 3618 Montridge Ct, Arlington, TX 76016. Let him know the date and approx number of attendees.

...FIND THE WEB PAGE? <http://www.FISTS.org>

...SUGGEST IDEAS FOR THE WEB PAGE? Contact Bill KK4KF at bjmyers@arc.net

...ORDER FISTS CLUB QSL CARDS? send SASE to WX9X at 354 West St, Valparaiso IN 46383

...ORDER A FISTS CLUB ID BADGE? Our club badge is dark blue, with FISTS logo in gold and your name, FISTS number, callsign and "Int'l Morse Preservation Society" in white. They are \$6.95 post-paid from The Signman of Baton Rouge 879 Castle Kirk Dr, Baton Rouge LA 70808; email nv5a@aol.com

A non-engraved, laminated club badge is available from Bruce Eichmann W2BE, 204 E. Lake Blvd, Medford NJ 08055. Cost is \$4.75, NJ residents \$5.00 because of tax.

The Keynote is published approximately monthly by Nancy Kott WZ8C, P. O. Box 47, Hadley MI 48440-0047 Email: nancy@tir.com WZ8C reserves the right to edit submissions for space, clarity and topic suitability. Comments not attributed to another are written by WZ8C. Articles from The Keynote may be reprinted if credit is given to the original author.

Call Changes

Tom 3001 was KB0WVO, is now KC0W
Bud 3309 was KJ5XC, is now N1LH
Ralph 5066 was N3VJI, is now AA3RI
Jon 4136 was KF6OLA, is now AD6FX.

The new call was reported erroneously as AD5FX.
Andreas, 4961 was KF6NEB, then KQ6WL is now
AD6FQ

Mike, was KE4HLU, is now KU4TZ
Brian was N2UB, is now AC4W
Jon, 2494 was KB8VVX, is now W8IMP
Bob 2624 was KE4FKX, is now W4FKL
George K5HT is now KJ5C

WANTED

I can't seem to find anybody that sells a (computer) keyboard CW keyer that offers Farnsworth spacing as one its features; Heathkit used to sell one years ago, but of course they're defunct now. Could you, or any of your readers, point me in the right direction? My work phone number is 253.272.2216, ext. 1116; it has voicemail so a message can be left anytime. Of course, everybody's allowed to e-mail me, too, at <Richard_Stuart@aw.org> Thanks, Rich WF7A

Ernie Cardona is looking for a Heath SA-2500 Antenna tuner and control box. This tuner is installed between the coaxial cable and the feedpoint of the antenna. If you know of one for sale, call him collect at 708-790-5263 or write him at Quintas De Cupey Apts, Apt #F101, San Juan PR 00926

New Zealand Chapter News

Hi folks. I thought that you might like an update on what's been happening down under. We picked up six new ZL members and a couple have sent feelers and I am waiting to hear back from them. We received a nice column in the Morseman column in this month's NZART magazine Break In and I gather from it that Gary Bold ZL1AN the Morse editor is planning to join. He is well known and respected and would be a good catch. Bill ZL2BIL a new Fists member is also a Break In columnist and he will keep up the good work in a future QRP column.

The long awaited article appeared in the WIA magazine this month and I have received three inquiries so far. It's too early to know what will be the response from that article. One of the inquirers suggested that I also write to the editor of Radio And Communications, which he alleges is read by more amateurs than the WIA magazine, as the membership ratio of WIA is very low.

Over there they suffer from a federal structure where every state has its autonomous section in WIA and they

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fight among themselves which puts off a lot of members. Anyway, I sent off the letter tonight, so it will be interesting to see if it has any better result.

The new members are very happy with their certificates but otherwise not much feedback yet. My main FISTS activity has been keeping the membership list up to date!

I have worked a few FISTS stations lately, mostly about 03:00 Z to 05:00 Z on 20 metres. (Stan, I listened and called yesterday on 14.040 MHz 03:00 to 04:00 Z but although quite a lot of traffic, nil heard from you) Vy 73 to everyone. Keep in touch. RALPH ZL2AOH Ralph Sutton 12c Herbert Gardens 186 The Terrace Wellington 6001 New Zealand

CW Net Classes

These classes are being offered in Michigan, but may also be available in other parts of the country as well. Sounds like a good idea! If you're interested, contact the address at the end of the article.

The Intro to QMN Classes are designed for those that have an interest in becoming involved in NTS CW nets. The first half of the class will be about the National Traffic System. We will cover:

A) The structure of the NTS; how nets are layered, how the various nets within the system interface with each other, and how the cyclical concept works.
B) The NTS Radiogram Format. We provide the student involved with all the necessary information to be able to properly construct a radiogram. We will also cover such topics as ARL Numbered Radiogram formats and Health and Welfare message traffic.

C) Basic radiotelephone net procedures. We will cover how to check-in to a phone net, how to spell difficult names and words, how to properly transmit figures and "mixed groups," and how to transmit message traffic. The second half of the class will cover QMN:

We will go over the procedures used on CW nets in detail. All instruction will be done through actual demonstration using CW. Covered in this class will be the following subjects: A) How the net is called to order B) When and how to check-in (with or without traffic) C) How stations are sent off frequency to clear traffic D) How to transmit the radiogram E) Returning to net from an off-frequency exchange F) Leaving or being-excused from the Net. The class will conclude with a simulated CW net in which everyone can participate. The keys and oscillator will be provided. We will also talk about the QMN National Weather Service Rain Gauge Network. We will cover how to format a report for NWS, how to list the traffic, and provide information on rain gauge placement, snowfall measurements, and storm damage reports.

We will have available for each participant a set of oper-

ating aids including an ARRL Public Service Communications Manual and a Michigan Net Public Service Communications Handbook. The cost of these items is about \$ 10 total, so we are asking for a donation of \$ 10. However, if someone doesn't have the ten bucks they will still be welcomed! It is very important that those who want to participate RSVP as soon as possible. The addresses are: e-mail wb8siw@aol.com; phone Jim Wades @ 734-482-3230; snail mail Michigan Net (QMN) PO Box 970934 Ypsilanti, MI. 48198.

Locations/Dates: September 19 -- Traverse City, MI
October 24 -- Oscoda, MI; November 7 -- Grand Rapids, MI ; November 21 -- Lansing, MI

Why does it take so long?

written by Stan K4UK, Bureau Manager

Some members have questioned: "Why does it take so long to get QSL's via the Bureau?" I thought I'd describe the operation of the Bureau to help members understand. All envelopes are opened the day they are received. I sort the cards by call number and put them into the call number stack.

The Franklin County ARC has its meeting the second Monday every month at which time I distribute the stack of cards and SASE's to each of my helpers. Also, I try to get the stacks of cards and SASE's to my helpers at least once between the meetings, and more often if their stack gets big - like 50-75 cards.

The helpers do the final sort, generally within a day or two of my getting the cards and SASE's to them. In this final sort, if you don't have enough cards to justify sending them out, they will sit in the SASE until the helper receives the next bunch of cards.

That is, if your SASE has a 32 cent stamp on it, we will wait until you have a minimum of 7 cards before mailing them. If your SASE has 55 cents postage (or 2-32 cent stamps) on it, we will wait until you have a minimum of 15 cards before mailing them. If your SASE has 78 cents postage on it, we will wait until you have a minimum of 23 cards before mailing them. If your SASE has 3-32 cent stamps on it, we will wait until you have a minimum of 31 cards and then add 5 cents postage before mailing them.

We try to use the value of the stamps on the SASE as the reference as to how many cards we should get before mailing. To help us serve you better, I would suggest that each member using the Bureau designate on the SASE either how often they want us to mail cards or the minimum quantity they want mailed in each SASE. Without this guidance we will continue to use the 7, 15, 23, 31 cards for 32, 55(&64), 78, 96

cents postage criteria. We can and will make monthly mailings of your cards regardless of the postage on the SASE. *But you have to let us know that is what you desire.*

Now, a little explanation of why I don't get stacks of cards to my helpers more often. My helpers live in various diverse areas of Franklin county with "quaint" names such as: Burnt Chimney, Union Hall, Henry, Rocky Mount, Callaway, and Forest. My QTH is on the shore of Smith Mountain Lake in the Northeast corner of the county. The closest helper is Buddy, W4YE who lives near Burnt Chimney - 8.2 miles away. All the rest live more than 15 miles from me. Two of them live more than 30 miles from me. The furthest helper being Frank, KE4HOA who lives near Henry - 32.4 miles away.

We do try to coordinate meeting at locations half-way between our QTH's - often for breakfast or lunch on Route 220 just North of Rocky Mount, Virginia. But the schedules of retirees, which most of us are, are fuller than you would think. And, of course, the helpers are unpaid volunteers. Any of you who have worked with volunteers know you don't "put a burr under their saddle" or "kick butt" as some members have suggested. When they get behind in sending out mailings I offer to help and do so.

The volume of work is not insignificant. Since January the quantity of cards handled has totaled 28,654. In addition to the initial sort, I have handled 4104 cards for the "4" calls, 1708 cards for the Canadians and 575 cards for the DX on this side of the Atlantic. That's a total of 6387 cards. In addition, I have sent 2420 cards to Bob Lowe for FISTS on the other side of the Atlantic.

My helpers have handled: Riley ("1" calls) 1523 cards; Charlie ("2" calls) 3447; Bob ("3" calls) 1972; Fred ("5"/"9" calls) 3981; Anthony ("6" calls) 2322; Buddy ("7" & "0" calls) 3021; Shilynn ("8" calls) 3581 So, the Franklin County ARC has been kept quite busy with this FISTS QSL Bureau.

I hope this explanation will help members understand why sometimes it takes so long for cards to get to them from the Bureau. I welcome any suggestions for improving the operation. Remember, however that we are all volunteers who would like to do some operating as well - Hi! Stan - K4UK

PS from Nancy WZ8C: PLEASE do not send your cards to my POBox 47 address - send them directly to the buro at the address on the How Do I page! Sending them to me will slow things up!

UPCOMING EVENTS

TRIPLE FISTS CLUB EVENT

Three FISTS clubs, three states, 3-letter suffixes, and 3 points for working each station! What does that add up to? The first annual West Coast Triple !!

FISTS Northwest, K7FFF (# 4400), the Vista Valley FISTS CW Club, K6FFF (#4444), and the Cowlitz FISTS Club, WA7YYY (#1900), are teaming up for this special event on September 19th, 1998. Many members from all three clubs will be on the air on 6 band segments looking for participation from all FISTS members to make this event a rousing success. So, put away those licensing proposal blues and warm up the rigs, paddles and keys for the first annual WCT!

You can earn 3 FISTS points for working each club, plus K6FFF will issue a special WCT certificate to FISTS members who work all three clubs and make application to Kerry Freeman, N6WU (supported by the club logs.) Please enclose return postage for 2 oz for your certificate. Donations to offset printing costs will be appreciated.

Following are the rules and procedures for the WCT. A copy of these can be found at the K7FFF website at: <http://www.imagina.com/webpages/casey/k7fff> (or search for K7FFF in any web search engine).

Date and Times: Saturday, September 19th, 1998. 8 hours: from 1:00 - 9:00 PM PDT (2000Z-0400Z)

Band coverage: 80, 40, 20, and 15 meters in the Advanced/General band segments and 40 (7.108)and 15 (21.108) meters in the Novice segments. Six segments total. The goal is to have one operator from each club per band segment at any given time.

Calling: Listen for "CQ WCT" or "CQ Triple". Clubs may be in any portion of the band segments, but will try to be near a FISTS calling frequency (.x58)

Exchange: FISTS participants: RST, name, state, FISTS number. Non-FISTS: RST, name, state. Remember, non-FISTS can accumulate points that can be used when they join FISTS, but are not eligible for the WCT Certificate unless they are a FISTS member at the time of the event.

Operating: We want to encourage inexperienced as well as experienced operators to participate and keep this a low-key event. This is NOT a contest. The clubs are not competing and no multipliers or such are used.

Please feel free to ragchew, but keep it brief to give as many FISTS members as possible a chance at earning the club points and WCT Certificate. All due courtesy to QRP'rs and Novices!

QSLing: All FISTS please QSL via the FISTS buro.

Non-FISTS please QSL directly to the club you contacted and include a self-addressed stamped envelope for the return QSL. On behalf of K7FFF, K6FFF, and WA7YYY we thank you all for your participation!! See you in September and 73!!

FISTS DXPEDITION ???

Nancy, I read your comment about a possible FISTS DXpedition and here is the real thing. If there is interest, a place can be selected and the other details worked out.

FISTS DXpedition
by Ed Breneiser, WA3WSJ

I've been chasing DX for about twenty years now and have found no greater joy then going on a DXpedition. In 1994 a friend, K3TEJ, and myself went to Puerto Rico for eight days to operate the CQWWCW Contest. My call was WA3WSJ/KP4. During 1996 we operated from Abaco Island in the Bahamas and my call was WA3WSJ/C6A. Last year we operated from Antigua and my call was V26ED. Needless to say, I'm hooked on DXpeditions.

On all of these trips I had a tremendous amount of fun with CW and experienced the local culture. I think it's time for a FISTS DXpedition! I know it would be a fun trip both radio wise and R&R wise. How does this sound: work DX when it's there (it's usually always there) and swim, fish or just plain relax. I am willing to organize the trip, but is anyone interested in it? If there is interest, a place and time could be worked out.

If you're interested in taking a FISTS DXpedition, you can contact me at: Edward R. Breneiser 775 Moonflower Ave. Reading, PA 19606-3447 (610) 582-0520: voice/fax breneiser@talon.net 73, ERB Edward R. Breneiser

Look for Dave N8WTH

I Just wanted you to know that I'll be going to Europe soon, and hope to do some (brief) operating. I've been issued the calls OZ / N8WTH (Denmark) and N8WTH / EA4 (SPAIN). I'm also hoping to do some op. in Portugal. I'll only be QRV for a limited time in these cities, at select times during these intervals:

MADRID, SPAIN AUG 31 - SEPT. 11

LISBON, PORTUGAL SEPT 12 - SEPT 19

MADRID, SPAIN SEPT. 21 - SEPT. 23

73 de Dave, N8WTH

NET REPORTS

Net times/ days are on the masthead of the Keynote

Sunday Century Net

June 7: The net was a wash. We could not hear each other and there was a lot of background QRN. I'm afeared the band is NOT going to cooperate for awhile. The checkins were AC6TO, KC5VJU, W5UIP, W8BL, K7FD, AC5P, N4VEF, KQ6NS, VE4GEC, K2ACW, and N1PT. I am sorry if I could not hear other callers but in some instances we couldn't even say 73, we just faded away.....NCS W8FAX

July 5: We had a good net this Sunday. Pretty good conditions and lasted almost two hours. The checkins were KC5VJU, AC6TO/M, N4VEF, N0BZM, AA1TF, VE5HQ, W3ERU, AE2L, N4ZMP, K7FD, K2SWZ, K0HFK, K7FFF, KA0W, W8BI, W4GEC and K6SRZ. I would like to thank the stations who notified me when they were leaving the net. This sure helps prevent a lot of wasted calling time when the operators know who has gone QRT. NCS W8FAX

July 12: N4VEF Dick, AA9KH Jay, K7FD John, N0BZM Ray, K6DF Dennis, WA1GAG Tom, K7FFF John, KA9CRF Don, VE4GEC Glen, VY2RB Dick Thanks to all for their QNI Sri culdn't copy all well. Mini Thanks to Jay AA9KH for his help in relaying for me, it was sure appreciated Jay. KC5VJU NCS
July 26: The FISTS Century Net had only 5 Check ins. Band lousy and a CQ BB going on the whole time. 10 Messages. Check ins as follows: N4VEF Dick, WP2T Maggie, AC5P Mike, AA9KH Jay, N4ZMP Orin. NCS AC6TO Stan

August 2: N3RSD/0, KC5VJU, K7FD, AC6TO, W6GA, K7FFF, KI5UK, N4VEF, N5VC, KQ6NS, AA5EA, W6JUS. Also had a new FISTS with no

number yet AC6XG. Thanks to all who checked in. Was a ruff net with lots of qrm and bad cdx, but we still managed a few connections. 73 Al/W8FAX

August 9: KC5VJU NCS, WA1GAG Tom, AA9KH Jay, N4VEF Dick, AC6TO Stan, KC8GOJ Roger, K0HFK Bill, N0NJK Jim, KI5UK Harry. We had a good net and had some new Ones check in and were sure glad to have them. Anyone wanting to check in Please do so and if speed is not rite for you just tell net control what speed you desire. Best Wishes to all and hope to see more Fists join us on the net. Good place to pick up new numbers for your awards. KC5VJU Jim 2920

15 METER SLO-CHAT NET

Net Controls Bill, VE5HQ and Becky, KF6GUH

June 7: WA0REE: KF6GUH: KF4RRM: KD5CKP: VE5HQ June 14: KF6GUH: W2NGB: WA0REE: KD5CKP: K3VE June 21: KF6GUH: WA0REE: KF6DGR: W8FAX: KI7LX.

Other Traffic Nets

Central Time Zone: OK training net, 'otn' 3692.5 khz at 6:00 pm each night. TX slow net, 'tsn' 3719 khz at 8:00 pm each night. LA slow net, 3713 khz at 8:30 pm Monday through Friday **Pacific coast nets:** N. CA net, first one is the cnc/1 meets 3705 at 7:00 pm local time, runs a little fast, and then the second one meets same freq, at 9:00 pm and runs a bit slower, the cnc/2. NCN/VHF net at 9:00 pm local Northern CA time on 145.210 minus offset, and pl is 100.0 at the same time the ncn/2 cw net runs which is on 3705 khz, pacific time.

FISTS Code Buddy Program by John W9EM

Hello FISTS! It was another busy two months. Thanks to everyone for their participation. I had several reports of upgrades and it just shows that the program really works. If you are interested please send me your application and I'll find the perfect Code Buddy for you. Thanks to the members that volunteered to help our special New Jersey member. I found someone that will try to help Bill on 2m & 70 cm.

Two months ago our Code Buddy database contained one hundred twenty-eight and grew to one hundred and fifty. This month it grew again to one hundred sixty-nine. We had thirty-seven assignments two months ago and forty-one last month (this includes both students and teachers). So you can see we have had quite a bit of activity.

As of this writing, my records show all students are assigned and we are out of available teachers. If you think you are a Code Buddy and you are waiting for a student assignment, or if you are a student waiting for assignment, please contact me because I don't have your information as current. Please fill out a new application and send your information to me at: John Cmiel - W9EM 34020 N. Hickory Ave. Grayslake, IL 60030-1014 or w9em@aol.com. Thanks again for your interest and support. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or if you would like additional information about the FISTS Code Buddy Program.

New Mobile Century Award

This award is earned by accumulating 100 points of Two Way CW QSO's made while MOBILE on and after September 1, 1998.

The rules are the same as the Basic Century. Two Way CW QSOs within your own country are worth 1 point. Two Way CW QSO's with countries as defined by DXCC rules are worth 2 points. Duplicate contacts do not count.

If you have not earned a Basic Century but apply for the Mobile Century, you will automatically be issued a Basic Century Certificate in addition to the Mobile Century Award

You may count the points claimed for the Mobile Award toward the QRP Century Award if the power used is 5 watts or less. They may also be counted toward the Gold, Platinum or other Awards if you have not previously claimed the contacts.

For purposes of this award "MOBILE" shall mean:

1. Any motor vehicle used to transport people (car, truck, etc.)
2. The mobile must be moving, or stopped temporarily, as at a stop light

NOTE: An RV or similar vehicle parked at a campground would be considered PORTABLE and NOT COUNTED toward this award. However, an RV or similar vehicle that is moving would be MOBILE.

3. QSOs made while you are driving or while you are a passenger in the vehicle are eligible.
4. Transmitting and receiving antennas must be physically attached to the vehicle.
5. Transceiver must be located inside vehicle.

The start of this award will be September 1, 1998. Any contacts made before that date will not count toward this award.

You do not have to have a QSL card to claim a contact for this award. Send a list of your FISTS contacts with QSO information (name, call, FISTS number, band, date) to the North American FISTS Award Manager, Joe Nihen/N3LBC, 222 E. Bertsch St., Lansford, PA 18232. There is no charge for this award for FISTS members, but return postage is appreciated. Non-FISTS are eligible for the award, but please include \$1.00 to help defray expenses.

FISTS RAG CHEWERS AWARD

This award is earned by making 100 two-way CW QSO's with FISTS members with each QSO lasting at least 30 minutes. Duplicate contacts are valid providing they are made on different days.

QSO's claimed for this award may also be counted toward other awards provided they have not been previously claimed for that particular other awards.

Only QSO's made on or after September 1, 1998 are eligible.

You do not have to have a QSL card to claim a contact for this award. Send a list of your FISTS contacts with QSO information (name, call, FISTS number, band, date, length of chat) to the North American FISTS Award Manager, Joe Nihen/N3LBC, 222 E. Bertsch St., Lansford, PA 18232. There is no charge for this award for FISTS members, but return postage is appreciated. Non-FISTS are eligible for the award, but please include \$1.00 to help defray expenses.

Operating Mobile

by Grant Mitchell

I have been operating mobile for the past 18 years and just recently installed a semipermanent rig in the mobile. I've worked over 200 DXCC countries while mobile and I have enjoyed each and every contact. I would like to share the following information with our group:

RIGS: My first mobile rig was a Yaesu FT 901DM also used as the base rig. Quite large for a mobile but worked quite well. My Yaesu FT 707 worked very well also but after a year I traded up for a second base rig and bought a Yaesu FT 107M. It was a large rig but all solid state with memories and WARC bands. I used that rig for about 10 years as a mobile/base. Next was a Kenwood TS 850S and it worked great as a mobile/base with the built in keyer, but was also a large rig so I decided to look for something smaller. After doing some checking around I picked up a Yaesu FT 757GX and installed it in the mobile about a month ago. It is a nice small rig so seems ideal for mobile work. I tried a ICOM 706 which is a nice small rig however it contains IF Shift which seems more suited to SSB than CW. I like a rig with WIDTH/PASS-BAND tuning for CW and the FT 757GX has both IF Shift and WIDTH control. I still have the FT107M and use it for contesting, the Kenwood TS 850S is my base.

ANTENNAS: I started out with a single band Hustler antenna. About 2 years later, I started using the Hustler mast with 3 resonators attached to it so had three bands available without changing antennas. I use the quick disconnect on the mast and have two separate antennas each set up with 3 resonators. That makes 6 bands available. If I need to stop and change to a different antenna/mast it only takes about 2 minutes with the quick disconnect. The base is bolted to the rear bumper and I use a spring mount between the base and the quick disconnect. I also tie an 80 lb test monofilament fishing line between the upper mast and door handle. This keeps the antenna vertical at speeds but still has some give if it hits something. Right now I have 30, 20, and 15 Meters on one mast and 40, 18, 10 meters on the other. I might switch them around as band conditions change. The quick disconnect also allows me to remove the antenna and store in the mobile if I am leaving the vehicle.

LOGGING: Started with a scratch pad as a temporary log. Then as I started to work lots of DX and contests, I switched to a small tape recorder. That worked well for many years. I now use a clipboard style scratch pad with a printout of needed info. I made this with my computer. I tried one of those small, backlit business organizers but I could not read them too well in a moving vehicle. At the end of my drive I transfer the information to my home computer logging program. I have a laptop and thought about live logging, but not sure I want to try that yet..Hi!

OPTIONS/ACCESSORIES: I added a small map light

for nighttime operating. Also mounted a remote speaker close to my left ear which helps hearing if operating with the windows open. I built a headphone setup with one ear pad so I could hear both the road sounds and the CW (this is especially nice when the XYL and I travel together). I use a 24 hour dual/time watch to keep track of the time of QSO. I keep a map in the vehicle to help me identify when I am in a different county as lots of operators are county hunters.

VEHICLES: I always use a vehicle with bucket seats and no console. The rigs were supported by an adjustable mobile bracket from Yaesu, which works well with almost any large rig. I built a small wooden operating table between the buckets to hold the paddle, scratch pad and my arm (comfort) My current vehicle is a Chevrolet van and the operating table between the buckets also holds the rig. The rig is held in place with a bungee cord clipped into two eyelets that are screwed into the operating table (allows quick removal). I used a set of 4 small metal cups screwed into the operating table to set the rig feet into. Keeps rig from moving around on turns and bumps. I use a heavy mirror-type window tinting (legal here in Florida) to help prevent theft and if I am leaving the vehicle I can either cover the rig or remove it.

RIG OPTIONS: I like a built in keyer - less clutter, or straight key. A dial lock is good. I remember working JA1NUT about 5 AM one morning on my way to Tampa, FL from Miami and accidentally hitting the VFO! Luckily I remembered the QRG and spun the dial back just in time to hear him turn it over to me. I hit dial lock after that. A good noise blower is necessary. I have used Bencher, G4ZPY, Hamco (now Vibroplex), paddles and all work great. As the installation is semipermanent I now use a Bencher with a plastic cover to prevent dirt/dust from entering. I have used an assortment of different keyers from MFJ, Curtis, AEA, and even the Kansas City Keyer I now use at the base. All worked well and I am now using the built in keyer in the FT 757GX.

OPERATING: You must be able to copy in your head! Write the important information down. Be prepared for signals to go up and down as you change direction. Also, power line noise can be a problem. A Q5 signal can be lost if you are stuck at a stop light next to an arcing power line! Keep track of where you are for those hunting counties or grid squares. Know your rig operating controls, you don't want to be fumbling around looking for a knob or button while driving. At night your map light setup should not reflect on the windshield to block your vision.

THE FUN PART: Working all those FISTS and getting great 599 reports from that mobile setup you worked so hard on. That long road trip goes by in a flash. You look forward to going to work just so you can operate some CW from the mobile. (I'm not so sure that fits everyone!!) Just enjoying the hobby. Hope to see everyone from K2ACW/M. 73 from K2ACW, Grant #2573

FISTS FEEDBACK

Zero Beating

From: Fred NY2V -- The article regarding zero beating assumed that the sidetone tracks the offset. My (and many other) TS-440S rigs do not. The sidetone circuit is separate and cannot be adjusted (even factory service won't touch that problem). The manual says to zero beat by tapping the key and matching the note with the received signal. My sidetone sounded much higher (and it is, by 150 Hz) than the offset the manual says the rig has.

One person said to switch to FSK and use that to zero beat. Good idea, but the received signal often disappears, making the task very difficult. Furthermore, we are dealing here with a 100-to-200 Hz error, and zero beating does not work well in such cases, whereas tone-matching does.

The TS-440S will transmit on 10MHz, WWV. Here is the solution. Get another receiver and tune in WWV and then find its zero beat. Key the rig, set to 10MHz, into a dummy load and zero beat to WWV. Now listen to the note. It should be the rig's offset, roughly 750 Hz. Note that your sidetone may be much higher than this note.

One solution is to build a small oscillator set to the rig's offset tone, and key it when zero beating a received station. Maybe your keyer has an adjustable sidetone, which would do the trick. If not, let's go back to the WWV or any other known signal (CHU is an alternative). Tune dead on the time signal. Switch to CW. The note you hear is the rig's offset. Punch in the Notch button. Adjust the notch to remove the tone. Do not touch that notch control again. When you want to zero beat, just punch notch, tune the received signal until you remove its tone, then punch Notch back off. Since you may use the Notch on CW, pencil a mark on the notch knob perimeter where the offset is, so you can go back to it.

If you are using an audio filter, either analog or digital, that too can be used to find near-exact zero beat. The NIR-12 I use is superb in this regard - good enough that I no longer use the Notch filter method of beating. The venerable QF-2 audio filter, using either notch or peak, also works extremely well for zero beating. With the latter, you again must mark the position on the Frequency knob where the offset is, just as I did with the Notch knob on the rig itself. This also applies to the NIR-12 freq.knob, but I just

leave it, checking it occasionally against CHU or WWV.

Getting back to receiving on 10MHz, if you use your TS-440S on full QSK, listen to your signal on that other receiver. You will sound choppy with standard keyer weighting. Adjust the keyer's weighting control so the dots are reasonably long. Take note: with that weighting, if you switch to semi-QSK, your keying will be very close to a continuous unbroken tone. That is how badly the rig chops the leading edge of the signal on full QSK.

The TS-440S/AT has been a great rig for me, but the lack of design attention to the offset vs. sidetone situation, and the poor keying characteristics, are a big negative and require the attention just described. If I had paid attention to the QST product review, I would have bought a relatively large and clumsy, less-full-featured Ten - Tec at the time, never mind the price difference. One can count on the fingers of one hand the Japanese rigs which have anywhere near comparable CW QSK performance. None quite match the Ten - Tecs, but come close enough if you insist on full-coverage receive. My current thinking is that one should own an Omni VI AND a shortwave receiver that can be tuned with a BFO for CW reception. Some time ago I called the lack of CW performance detail in recent HF product reviews a key factor needing more attention. They acknowledged that, and I have seen, in what few reviews have followed, some return to checking the rigs on CW QSK.

I hope this helps. It should apply to any transceiver which uses a separate nonadjustable and non-offset-tracking sidetone, and/or has poor full break-in due to severe shortening of the transmitted full-QSK signal. 73 and ZUT, Fred, NY2V, FISTS 1293

From Arley WB5NKC: On page 15, Issue 6, in the article about the Vista Center, it mentions that they no longer will need their MFJ antenna tuner because the new radio has a built in tuner. This is something that a lot of the 'new amateurs think'. That inboard tuner takes the place of the 'plate and load capacitors and coils' in the new rigs.

The external tuner is still necessary to match an antenna to the rig. These transistor rigs do not like very much 'swr'.

I have heard this many many times, and they are incorrect in their thinking. We had one local amateur ruin a good rig because of that fact. I kept telling him he needed a 80 meter antenna for 80 meters, and he

kept using a 40 meter antenna because it was showing low swr in the rig, and it messed it up real good.

The inboard tuners just makes it easier for amateurs that were 'too lazy' to get the rig set right. We used to have to 'peak' the signal with the 'load' capacitor, and 'dip' the 'plate current with the plate capacitor'. Also, the power was suppose to 'peak,' if you had it 'neutralized,' correctly and there was a capacitor for that.

But remember, these rigs really work for a long time if they have a 'low swr' at the 'rig.' The 'antenna tuner' did just that. Now, after they take the 'antenna tuner' out of the line, the inboard tuner has to 'do it all.' It will for a while, but you better hope you have a good warranty, and don't tell them that you was letting it look at 'high swr' or they might not want to 'fix it' with the warranty.

The dealers that sell these rigs don't take the time to tell folks about these simple things. They want to sell rigs, not give an education. And most of the time, the people that are buying the rigs 'already know it all.' Have fun, keep up the good work.

POUNDING BRASS STILL KICKS

— ...
de Steve N8CPA

Wrist Strain and the Straight Key *by VE3MIQ Bill McNanny*

I have the contact clearance of my Kent key set to about 1 thousandth of an inch or less---WHOA! That is less than the thickness of a sheet of newspaper. The spring tension adjustment is set at a minimum; not much more than is required to return the key to the "up" position. This will be awkward to you at first and requires patience and practice to do effectively. Oh and the contacts must be clean and dust free. Even though the D-C voltage between the contacts is low (my IC-756 around 5 volts), the electric field is high and you have created a small electrostatic precipitator and dust will accumulate--so you must keep the contacts clean if you have a light touch.

Now your arm and wrist can be completely relaxed and all you have to do is "wiggle" your index finger--sort of like gently tapping you finger. It works and after 48 hours on SKN with snooze breaks--NO SORE ARM! I can hold 1-1/2 hour QSO's with no problem. I have watched hams on their straight key and it looks like they are pumping water with an old hand pump or cracking walnuts. They have the clear-

ance set at least 1/16 inch and spring tension that would support a lead brick. No wonder their arm and wrist starts to "thump" after 5 minutes. Try my method and be patient with it--you won't regret it!

There is one cautionary note: When you are away from the key, put the rig in a mode that disables the key; ie: "break-in" in the "off" position. This will prevent accidental transmission due to a large fly perching on the key--Hi Hi.

Note: I do not think this method will work well using a "sloppy" key such as a J-38. It requires a precision made straight key. The Kent key is repeatable with no end or side play to the bearings. The Kent itself made--solid, like a rock! Bill--VE3MIQ

FISTS Presentation Praise

Are you still debating whether to do the FISTS Presentation for your local club? Here's what one FISTS member, John KX8LL, has to say:

Just short note to say how well the presentation went. Got materials 2 1/2 hours before meeting time! Read thru them as wife drove me to club meeting. It was a snap with the transparencies, just put one in projector and go. Got a nice response and lots of questions. The presentation program is fabulous, hope everyone takes advantage of it. 73 John KX8LL, 3146

Praise for Our Bureau

From Roger KC8GOJ #3952: I just had to write and give a comment about K4UK (Stan) and his friends at the "fists bureau". If there is a "Fists member of the Year", I would like to nominate Stan. He and the bureau are doing a wonderful job with all the QSL's , but also their going above and beyond that .

My good friend N3YWQ (Steve) had not sent in any envelopes to the bureau , and I knew this . So after a good QSO on the band I told him if he wanted my QSL it would be at the bureau ! Still he did not send the SASE! But after a nice letter from Stan , he now is sending along the SASE's and also a BIG TNX to Stan . So thank you Stan for doing what a mere mortal fists member could not . HI HI . JOB WELL DONE!

Many FISTS have worked Tom N3XT while he was mobile as AC4XT. He's been in and out of the hospital since his cancer operation and can use some cheering up. Pse send words of encouragement to him at AC4XT@aol.com or 4510 Glendale, Woodbridge VA 22193. I'm sure it will help him to let him know he's in our thoughts and prayers.

Solar Power for Ham Stations

by Pete KC5GXC

Solar power gives a ham independence from the commercial power grid. If calamity occurs and the grid goes down, the solar powered ham station will still be on the air just like nothing has happened. Solar is referred to as an "alternate energy source". Wind power, water power and gasoline or diesel generator power are also called "alternate energy sources". This area of southeast Louisiana is not good for reliable wind power. Water power means water coming down from high to low, so no water power here at all (in the alternate power sense). We can all procure generators if we want to and can afford them. They are much cheaper than solar setups in the initial stages, for the power available out of them. However, the solar would probably be more economical in the long run.

I guess one can tell that, by the above comments, that solar is expensive. My solar power set-up is an example. My 70 watt Siemens panel was \$370. The bracket was about \$75. The 2" pipe cost me about \$30. You can set panels on anything or mount it on a pole. I chose to mount mine in the air at 9' high. The controller was \$55. The big RV semi-deep-cycle battery was \$75. You must have heavy gauge wire to avoid any voltage loss between components. This is not cheap. I just happened to have some on hand. I guess the value of that is about \$60. I chose to hook up my system with AC backup and had to buy switches to build a panel to do that. One could do it more primitively and thus cheaper if needed.

After spending all the money and time on solar, how does it work? Well, my system works great. I have 2 HF radios, 2 AM receivers, a 12 V light, a 2 meter radio and multiple accessory jacks hooked up. Of course, I don't use all this stuff at the same time! I went on line with solar on 19 May 98 and have been on the air as usual with just a few minor problems. One problem I had was pulling down voltage on the battery at night with no sunlight inputting power at the time. This was minor and only occurred using the CW mode, which really pulls the power. I simply lowered the output of my CW rig to about 50 watts from 90 watts that I usually run. My signal reports are just a little less than before and I seem to get just about everybody I can hear calling "CQ"...just like before. On SSB, I left the rig power settings the same...about 90 watts, as far as I can tell. I have no problem with voltage drop using the microphone. SSB power out depends on a few different things, and I just don't pull

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the rig that hard.

The voltage drop problem could be solved by \$. I could buy another battery and parallel it to the original one and make more power available, but I really don't need to do that, so I won't.

The only other problem I have encountered, besides running out of money...hi hi...is RFI (radio frequency interference) on some of my AM receivers (broadcast band receivers for talk shows while I work on projects)...mainly, the automotive shop radio I run off the solar system. I was able to get most of the noise out of that by following the advice of the vendor of the controller. I put .1 mFd of capacitance across the input of the controller, now the radio is quiet enough for me. This capacitor was found at Radio Shack and only cost about a dollar. There are other ways to reduce this interference and by talking to others on solar newsgroups on the internet, I have discovered how to do it if needed.

I suggest that anyone interested in solar power, or alternate power of any type, check out the massive amounts of information on the internet. The vendor of my components is at wwwwindsun.com, and they provide a lot of information. A must to check out is Solar Sam's website. Just go looking for solar sam and you will find him! If anyone needs any information that I might possible provide, my e-mail is kc5gxc@bellsouth.net. Happy Sunshine...KC5GXC, Fist # 2032 - Pete Benfield- Pearl River, La.

FISTS Trivia

From Jim K7JIH #5186:

Got my first Keynote today. Thanks. I got to looking at the straight key that is the major part of the logo. I found myself wishing that the CW FISTS Club pentagon were removed so we could see how the key itself is made. It got my curiosity going. Usually the key makes contact at the point where you put your fingers on it but not this one. Mercy. Do we want people to be puzzled about this key? That hardly promotes morse code. What does that key look like?

The key in the FISTS logo is a graphic of a British style key, as seen in the Kent Key and others made in Europe. You can see the top of the adjusting screw where the key makes contact poking out behind the "T" in the FISTS pentagon. Also hidden by the pentagon is the pivot point of the key - Nancy WZ8C

DX Portion of the Keynote

Up-dated listings may be obtained from HQ. Full or US listing 3 2nd class stamps, EU 2 stamps. No envelope necessary. **Lapel Badges**, £1.50 incl. **Fabric patches** £2.50 incl. **QSL Cards** £5.00 per 100 or £8.00 per 200 (UK and EU pse add £1.00 for p/p. DX members - on advice. Personalised stickers £1.00 per sheet (65), max order 5 sheets.

SUBS: UK £5.00, EEC £6.00, Non-EEC EU, £7.00. Others £10.00.

Your renewal date appears on the mailing label and your anticipation would be much appreciated.

OFFICES

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DX 14/21/28.058 on the hour for 15mins
Pse keep watch all Novice allocations
UK Net Controls use GX0IPX/P

GREETINGS

Greetings people. I have not been too good health-wise this month which; apart from the desire to report on the RA/RSGB meeting in Birmingham is my only excuse for the delay to this news letter. However, I forget that Bob is due to fly over to the upside down country shortly so the aforementioned report will have to be held over to next month. The dreaded arthritis has struck I fear leaving me with sometimes as little as two hours sleep but it has been this way before and eased so perhaps it is simply the climate, either terrestrial and political. Hi.

In anticipation of help in re-writing the logging programme with an OOP (object oriented programme) to work better with Windows, I spent some time modifying it in advance and arrived at a very satisfactory answer which I am now using myself. Those who use it will no doubt be aware that it was written in the days when memory was measured in KBytes and a 40MB hard drive was state-of-the-art. The need to conserve both memory and disc space therefore was the prime objective resulting in five separate data files in which to store details of stations worked and a system of archiving the log in a series of separate chunks. With the GByte drives available today and Mbytes of

memory being common place, such frugality is no longer necessary. I have written a programme which will convert the files of current users to the new format and of course, this is accompanied by the modified HAM.EXE file; both of which are available for a return envelope and floppy. New users of course will receive this version and in addition, all sample contacts will be derived from the current club listing. Do I need to remind you all that this is completely FREE? The NZ chapter, captained by Ralph (ZL2AOH), now numbers nine members. Initial progress as I found myself, is quite slow but once a start has been made the slope rises from the horizontal in an exponential manner. I am sure you will be hearing lots more from the upside down lands very soon. He is already producing his own membership certificates and by this time, will have printed and distributed this Keynote. The prime cause of such small representation by ZL and VK is band conditions and the resultant lack of exposure to FISTS members. With a local(?) chapter, such contacts will carry a higher likelihood that the word will be spread in the Southern hemisphere. Additionally of course, local postage means less cost and hence, lower subs. Even at £10.00 we found ourselves running at a loss but now, local subs should come in at something approaching our own. All current ZL and VK members have been placed on the list of course which removes a (admittedly small) burden from the shoulders of Bob, G0FRL and your truly. Now if only I can find members prepared to translate the Keynote into (say) German, French and etc., we can have multiple chapters which will do the cause of CW absolutely no harm whatsoever. Please note that QSL cards and Century claims should be held over for a couple of weeks to give Bob time to return without finding his threshold jammed with correspondence on his return.

NEWS FROM MORSUM MAGNIFICAT

Has a new editor/publisher from 1999. We are very pleased to report that agreement has been reached with Zyg Nilski, G3OKD, that he will become editor/publisher of MM following publication of our December 1998 issue, MM61. We are sure all our readers will give Zyg a warm welcome and continue the same enthusiastic support for MM as before. Unless we are advised to the contrary by those affected, all outstanding subscriptions for issues beyond MM61 will be transferred to the new publisher. All articles and photos still awaiting publication at that time will also be passed on for use in future issues of MM.

RSGB FIASCO

The latest issue, MM59, contains a 7-page detailed report on various statements made by officers of the RSGB on the Society's change of policy on Morse testing. It also reports on responses by members to the Society's actions, and includes statements by the Chief

Morse Examiner, The RSGB's National Morse Practice Coordinator, and the Secretary of FISTS CW Club. It forecasts the long and short-term effects of the RSGB's actions, and seeks readers opinions on how the Morse community can continue to keep Morse alive.

Two dramatic developments as MM went to press are also reported. In an interview scheduled for publication in the July issue of the Society's journal 'RadCom', the RSGB President says that proposals are being put to the Radiocommunications Agency (RA) for a new 5 wpm licence with only limited access to the HF bands, not full access as he stated in June's Radcom. Furthermore, members' views are being sought on which bands would be appropriate for such a licence. This climb-down is clearly a response to the widespread reactions the Society received following its previous arbitrary decisions on the question of Morse testing, although it does not respond to accusations that it has undemocratically ignored the results of its most recent membership survey.

A contradictory bombshell then landed in the form of a statement contained in a leaflet 'Amateur Radio News from the Radiocommunications Agency' which was available at the RA stand at the Elvaston Castle National Radio Rally on 14th June. This statement, under the heading 'MORSE', reads: RA is to discuss a proposal to reduce the Morse test speed from 12 wpm to 8 wpm. Class B licensees - on passing the test - will have access to all frequency bands below 30 MHz (*VOICE ONLY*).

This proposal seemed so outrageous that MM suspected a hoax and sought confirmation from the RA of its accuracy. Not only was it ridiculous to suggest a Morse test for a speech only licence but, taken at its face value, such a licence could result in no new licensees being allowed to use Morse from the date the licence was introduced. After several days, incredibly, the RA confirmed that their statement was accurate, and at the last moment before the dispatch of MM58 we were able to place an insert in each copy giving details of this latest development. A hard-hitting editorial in this issue of MM, under the heading 'What's Happening at the RSGB?' sums up the situation when it says: 'Whatever happens now, its mishandling of the situation must surely make the once highly respected RSGB the laughing stock of the international amateur radio community.'

For those wishing to read the full report, single copies of MM58 can be obtained from G.C. Arnold Partners, 9 Wetherby Close, Broadstone, Dorset BH18 8JB, price (pounds) 2.50 or US\$5.00 cash.

Tony Smith G4FAI

MORSE TEST

Got a copy of a letter from Martin GW3PRLK directed at Roy, G4SSH (the Chief Morse Examiner for the RSGB) suggesting a modification of the test requirements. I have some sympathy with Martin here because as he notes, in the normal course of events, in

the whole of the Amateur career, the only time a hard copy is required is for the CW test. Martin is not for one moment suggesting that the test should be made any easier but in view of the above fact, the candidate should have the option to respond verbally to the test. I would imagine that most candidates would be more comfortable with the current 'hard copy' format because this is the way they learned the code but if there are exceptions then Martins' suggestion that they should be given the option would do no harm at all.

This all comes down to reading in the head of course and it is rather a shame that most people find this difficult until they are reasonably proficient in reading. To some it comes easy whilst others seem only to be able to retain a few short words mentally. It could be that it is not possible unless a complete train of information is being input and at slower speeds, that train is just not there. Certainly in my own case, I seem to remember that I was reading in my head from around 22wpm but not I suspect, before that.

QSL BUREAU OPERATION

I re-iterate the notes made earlier because some may well miss it but Bob will be going to Australia for a couple of weeks with the Paraplegic Bowls Team so he will be welcomed home by a positive mountain of mail unless QSLs and requests for Century awards are not timed to arrive around the 25th. of August. This trip is on behalf of a charity which Bob has been supporting for many years but how many of us I wonder would relish the prospects of 14 hours or more in the air lifting and bodily moving people in the cramped confines of a jet plane. Not many I would suggest.

A LETTER TO THE RSGB

The following is typical of many which our members have sent to the Society:

I write with considerable concern regarding the Society's proposal to alter the existing licence procedure in favour of a reduced Morse requirement. The issue of access to the HF bands is bound to be emotive but any solution proffered must meet with the approval of the vast majority of the amateur radio population. I accept that technology is ever changing and that Morse is but one communication mode, but I feel that there is an agenda amongst some of the radio fraternity not only to do away with the Morse requirement for access to HF but to eliminate CW from the bands altogether. If we are to see a large influx of new users, will existing band plans be respected or will the Society and the RA make adherence to band plans a mandatory requirement of the amateur radio licence?

I am sure that many Morse users are happy to live and let live provided that the CW segments are not eroded by data/voice transmissions. It would be a great pity that, in attempting to solve the perceived problem of

the decline in numbers of radio amateurs, steps were taken which might well exacerbate the situation whereby Morse users find it impossible to continue with the hobby. If this situation were to arise, amateur radio would no longer be the hobby which I have enjoyed for more than 25 years including membership of the RSGB.

G0KYC.

Here again we see frustration at the unreasonable refusal of authorities to recognise and act upon the single most voiced concern of the radio amateur not only here in the UK but throughout the world. There is overwhelming support for this action but the voices go unheeded. Accompanying this desire is the clear need that those who transgress shall not do so with impunity.

SILENT KEY

I am sorry to report that G3AFV passed away last month. I did get a telephone call from (I believe his Son) to this effect but failed to ask for further information. On attempting to return the call, the number I held was unobtainable.

Samuel F.B. Morse
1791-1872

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THE STRAWBERRY BASKET

M1BDS. Met Elaine at the Leigh QRP rally and is at present, together with hubby (M1BDT), running a 6m Piccolo whilst the code comes. G0UQF. "GRANT SAYS NO TO 5WPM CODE" is the legend contained within a box on the back of his QSL card. Also, (again QSL card) shown is that of Tony when signing /SJ to mark the Silver Jubilee of the Royal Omari Amateur Radio Society. LA1IE. Our Otto went off to his mountain cottage for a week in company with his Son and family. The RSGB policy re. Licensing is worrying him and not without good reason. In previous years, the CQWW SSB contest found the CW segments of all bands totally swamped by SSB and 160m was virtually unusable from 1.810 upwards. CQ magazine seems to take the view that although simple rules

governing the span of frequencies used could be included, it is not their job to encourage recognition of the band plan so why should they? M0BDS. John at the time of his letter was QRT as far as e-mail was concerned because of problems with the Modem lead. He is not up to dealing with these miniature BT type plugs (are they now called Universal Bus Receptacles) which are becoming more common now on the newer breed of computers. I have a plastic gadget here which simply crimps the leads onto the contact surface though I am unsure if this is the best way. Anyone know better? G0FVS. Got a card from Costas, SV1DLS to discover that he lives close to where he lived and worked from whilst serving in the RAF Delegation to Greece some time ago. Your notes re Morse as a vehicle for introducing self discipline into the hobby is well taken and doubtless shared by the majority of our members. G4OHX. Sam operated from 4S7 in January and would appreciate help from anyone who can guide him towards a temporary ticket for Cuba in December. Are there any friendly amateurs or clubs he can visit? He has had no joy from any of the clubs he has written to and the Cuban licensing authority has thus far been deaf to his enquiries. G5XV. Ron suspects that the internet may spell the end of Telephony on the amateur bands since most school leavers are computer literate and take to the internet like ducks to water. Those who have done any surfing will attest to this because discussion groups (forums) abound in all manner of subjects and the way things are going now with speech facilities being offered, means that the attractions of amateur radio are becoming severely depleted. Ah well, if this does happen, at least we will end up with users who have the hobby at heart. G3BOK. Bill saved the very same QSL card that I lost. PY1DB (Daniel N. de Brito) born in 1901, whose card bears the information "CW World Recordman 65 wpm copy one hour endurance since 1934". Wow! You go through a lot of typewriters that way. Hi. G3VD. Bernard writes to say that GB4HMS is active on Sundays (phone and CW) and is located on HMS Warrior. No doubt a lot more CW would be evident if only they could find the operators! G0FDJ. Keith has been on holidays (F, DL, HB9, HB0 and OE8) for three weeks and regrets that he had forgotten to advise me prior. Vlad and his family who visited last year have been refused a visa by the British Embassy. Someone seems to think they the family would not want to return to Russia. G3WGL. Nolly mentions that he is frequently in contact with Mike (KE4GBE) on landline and Nolly, my apologies if I was unaware but I feel very sad that you lost Dolly last year. Older members will remember the photograph from Keynote showing Nolly, Dolly, Mike, Sherry and baby Hayley Merrill. G2HKU. Good grief Ted. Despite the governments' protestations that they are improving the NHS, his XYL spent no less than three days in the AE ward before they operated on a broken thigh bone. She now sports a 14 inch steel plate, 12 screws and the remnants of 44 stiches. As Ted observes, a dog would have been treated quicker. What with her in agony and

NEW MEMBERS

4847 G0NAN	Josh	4848 M0BAX	Brian
4849 HB9OX	Claude	4850 HATBSW	Tibor
4951 GOEKD	Tony	4852 GW0WMT	
4953 M0BUS	Denis	4854 G6IBU	Mark
4855 SM3NAB	Olow	4856 MW0ARV	Martin
4857 M1DBS	Elaine	4858 M0DBT	Ken
4859 DL1DSA	Andy	4860 G4DUC	Glen
4861 GM4XQJ	Brian	4862 G3RZ	Tom
4863 GM0FHD	Ernie	4864 G0WVA	Pete
4865 G3VRU	Eric		

You will note that the recruitment slope is still steepening. We are still a long way off the US gang but then again we do not have the same number of amateurs to circulate (given that at least some English is desirable) so this is no surprise.

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The above is extracted from the QSL card of SQ2CFK and was forwarded here because it rather tickled the recipient, G3GUR. Clearly a suitable candidate for sponsorship... any offers? (*Nancy's note: There must have been a graphic or something here in Geo's printed copy that didn't translate over this Email version I'm printing here!*)

ODDS N' ENDS

Our John, G4OOS has been very QRL on 80m with GB98FLD - Football Learning for the Disabled - and although I heard him earlier, did not get him into the log until 21 July. It appears there are some 130 countries taking part in this venture and it sounded like John was very much in demand. Hi.

WB5RJ sends me a QSL which is more of a certificate. It is in fact printed on a certificate blank of the same type we use in some five colours plus a grey watermark. Very flashy.

It was an odd day. A strange yellow/orange orb was in the sky and so bright was it that its warmth was felt clearly. Old Jack Crow had woken me; parked high in a neighbouring tree and barking out his challenge to all and sundry. I turned to the clock which announced the hour of 6:05. Disgusting! 15 minutes later the idea of another couple of hours kip was banished so I rose, took Tammy for a walk, brewed a cuppa and out of

surviving on pain killers, the worry caused Ted to run life threatening blood clots and collapse. He is now on Warfarin and the condition has restricted his radio activities. A G5RV dug out SM, OH, LS and IT on 6M. G4UCJ. Sean has been playing around on 6M with a quarter wave whip mounted on a central heating radiator. Temperature must have been set to 'hot' because he logged 7 countries in 15 squares. Best DX has been Yugoslavia, Sicily and Scandinavia. The lad has also received QSL cards from ET3, VP8, CE3, 8Q7, WP2 and a shipping consignment from VK, JA and PY. His '100 Years of Amateur Radio' award has recently arrived bearing the date 22 January 1998 and numbered 10. Can't believe that the Post Office is running that slow so the six months delay must be down to the RSGB. Your writing is like crystal compared to some stuff I receive Sean... worry not. I have here a request for information from PY (sans IRC of course) which is totally illegible. GW4IGQ. A lesson here for those of us who are too hard pressed to do our own chores. He got some chappy in to clip his hedge for him which he did after undoing with the ends of his antenna. Wind finished the job by wrapping the wire round the tower. Mayhap the replacement could be an improvement on the original though so look on the bright side. Hi.

AWARDS

Members applying for awards other than the Century are urged to be patient. It is Bob who handles the Century awards and generally speaking, he gets 'em out pdq but Platinum, Gold and Diamond are a different 'fettle of kish', sent here direct and printed/despatched asap. However, asap is exactly what it is because there are priorities one of which is Keynote. If I am in the process of writing, printing and stuffing ready for Bob to collect, everything in the shack revolves around this purpose. The bench is awash with paperwork, The telephone unit which normally lives on top of the scanner is sitting somewhere in the middle of this mess and even the operating bench (which should play little part in the process) is littered with odd bits of paper, sticky notes, half smoked cigarettes and a pot of tea. Oh for a QTH which would offer me an improvement over this situation but that is the way things are until my lottery ticket comes good. QSL cards I fear must also take their turn under these circumstances though new members are usually dealt with because these days I merely have to enter them into the database, add them to the logging system and then dump them into Bobs' lap via e-mail. So there you have the picture people and your patience would be appreciated.

Despite my oft repeated plea; letters, requests for updates and even subs continue to arrive here with **NO CALLSIGN**. Please remember that 99% of the activity here revolves around your callsign. The number is frequently handy (especially when handwriting is not of the best) but it still means quitting the programme I am working on to do a cross check.

curiosity switched on the rig. Surprise surprise.. 15M was open and JA, ZL and VK stations were pouring in. I had opened the verandah door as usual and before I could put hand to key I heard someone calling me. It was a neighbour and did I know that a large lump of the ivy which had been trimmed from the roots but was too high for the guy who trimmed it to reach, had fallen. Yes I did and as soon as I could find someone fit enough, it would be moved. There ensued some 15 minutes conversation at the end of which, not only was my tea cold but 15M was as silent as the grave. Isn't it amazing. One of the few occasions when I can actually get on the air at such an hour and the band drops out like a lead balloon in just 15 minutes. OK so you keep telling me that I should be up and about at 0400 to enjoy the best the bands have to offer but by the time I have completed my daily chores mateys, sleep is a precious commodity.

What on earth has happened to us in the past few decades. A younger (OK then much younger) Geo was apprenticed to an electrician at the Ministry of Works (Birmingham) and at that time, adhoc connections were made in a circular conduit box using 'Little Imps'. These were a shell of ceramic material about the size and shape of a toothpaste tube cap but conical with a coarse thread on the inner surface. You simply stripped the wires you needed connecting, twisted 'em roughly together and literally screwed them into the Imp. Rather than mount a connecting block, I sought a handful at the local electrical shop and was greeted by a gasp of disbelief. Those things had been outlawed for ages. These days you had to use a terminal block. I still watch DIY programmes on Sky TV and am a little miffed to find that making connections the old way is still current practice in the US. What are they gonna ban next I ask. Sex?

Query. Has anyone yet built a pair of the filters from last months' Keynote? I confess to being too busy but would appreciate a report from those with more time at their disposal.

Got a call from Bill, GW0SGG t'other day inviting me to come aboard as he was rounding up a few bodies for 10.280. It happened that I was tied up so was unable to oblige but as you know I do spend some time on there especially when there are contests running on the other bands so, rather than start off lower in the band I started calling CQ on 10.280 although I hooked no FISTS, there was queue of stations wanting to work me. Those of you who are QRV on this band are requested to give the odd call on that frequency (as usual, migrate LF if QRM). If we get sufficient FISTS showing up there it will be an encouragement to non-members to at least listen.

CENTURY HOLDERS

The following is an up-to-date list in callsign order:

AA0KJ, AA0WZ, AA1HV, AA1KF, AA2NL,
AA2SM, AA2YK, AA3LM, AA5EA, AA8PJ,
AA8YO, AA9KH, AA9KH, AB2AU, AB5EQ,
AB5YY, AC4DT, AC4NW, AC4ZH, AC5BG,

AC5JH, AC5P, AC6QO, AC6TO, AD4OS,
AD6AG, AD6FA, AD8L, ADUI, AE2L, AE4AZ,
AE4JG, AE4P, AE4QS, AE4VT, AF5Z,
AF9H, AI9L, DE0DXM, DL1CC, DL3BZZ,
EA1APA, EI2IH, EI5FY, F5JUD, F5NTP,
G0ENV, G0EVV, G0FIP, G0FOD, G0FRL,
G0FVS, G0GGU, G0HGA, G0IJE, G0ILN,
G0JWB, G0LJB, G0MGD, G0MRH, G0MWU,
G0NKO, G0NVY, G0ONS, G0RGP, G0SWU,
G0SZE, G0TBD, G0TCF, G0TGU, G0TUE,
G0UEE, G0UKX, G0UQF, G0VCY, G0VQA,
G0WAS, G0WAY, G0WEE, G3ASG, G3GXQ,
G3JRY, G3KEF, G3KFG, G3KQN, G3LPS,
G3MWP, G3OKA, G3VQO, G3WP, G3YLL,
G4BNU, G4EIB, G4JRE, G4LHI, G4NBI,
G4OOS, G4RBE, G4RHP, G4SSH, G4WBN,
G4XPE, G4ZIB, G8NT, GI0PCU, GM0DJI,
GM3KHH, GM4BAE, GW0SGG, GW0UHJ,
GW3VLU, GW4PXQ, GX0000, HP1AC,
IK2WYW, K1ZDI, K2ACW, K2IUC, K2SB,
K2SWZ, K2VT, K3AS, K3CJG, K3WWP,
K4HL, K4MF, K4PTU, K4UK, K4WZ, K4YKI,
K5DMC, K6DF, K7FD, K7FFF, K7GT, K7IB,
K7VZ, K7WF, K7ZR, K7ZYV, K8FN, K8JD,
K8LJG, K8UCL, K8UGL, KA1OX, KA1STU,
KA1SVX, KA2KDJ, KA3UXU, KA4IFF,
KA8QF, KA8TQR, KA8YRV, KA8ZDL,
KB2PLW, KB2SWI, KB2UZY, KB4JR,
KB4OPV, KB7ZO, KB8KIK, KB8KRD,
KB80OM, KB8ZVD, KB9NGF, KB9W, KC4UUG,
KC5GXC, KC5NRB, KC5VJU, KC7RZA,
KC7YWD, KC8BSC, KC8GOJ, KD1XA,
KD6WNM, KD7ABK, KE1AF, KE3NV, KE4GBE,
KE4ZQD, KF2G, KF2TP, KF6DCU, KF6GUH,
KG2LO, KG8DA, KG8WF, KG9HE, KI4IH,
KJ7OX, KK8B, KN2GSJ, KP4DJ, KQ6ES,
KQ6NS, KS4UV, KS7J, KT4QD, LA1IE,
LY3BY, LZ1JZ, M0AGO, M0ASN, M0AVW,
M0AXJ, N0ZNC, N1DNM, N1NM, N1PT,
N1PVP, N1TP, N1VWD, N1WL, N1WLC,
N1YLA, N2FX, N2SLB, N2ZHF, N3AO,
N3CEU, N3LBC, N3NY, N3PM, N3RSD,
N3XT, N3YVW, N4OT, N4VEF, N4ZMP,
N4ZZZ, N5DCF, N5LF, N5OE, N5VC, N5VC,
N6MZN, N6RNP, N6WU, N6ZKT, N7CFA,
N7HOK, N7IF, N7XNH, N8EQA, N8FF,
N8NLE, N8UJZ, N8WPX, N9LGP, N9TA,
NB2T, NC5S, NOIBT, NP4FW, NS2G, NS2H,
NW3N, OZ1EUO, OZ7KDJ, PA3AFF, SM4ASI,
SP6JOE, UA4AQO, UU0JN, V21CW, VA3JEG,
VA3JJ, VA3JPM, VA3KEW, VA3UU, VE1BBW,
VE1ZAC, VE3FMC, VE3KLM, VE3MIQ,
VE4GEC, VE5RD, VE6ARG, VE6KJL,
VE7CRO, VY2RB, W0GV, W2GR, W2JSF,
W2NTS, W3DP, W3ERU, W3JIM, W3NGO,
W3RMD, W4BX, W4DON, W4IUI, W4JCH,
W4MA, W4OGZ, W4RMM, W4ZCR, W5HQL,
W5RPJ, W5WWW, W5ZR, W6DDB, W6DDB,
W6GG, W6JEP, W7BWI, W7GB, W8BL, W8FDV,
W8LFJ, W9BYH, W9LUY, W9NT, W9YQ,
WA0FAX, WA0FGV, WA1GAG, WA2BQI,
WA2VQV, WA3PTY, WA4KQL, WA4LDQ,
WA5UFH, WA6RND, WA7YYY, WB2EXI,
WB2FXK, WB2HEK, WB2UEC, WB8FSV,
WB8OZX, WD0HBW, WD6CKT, WD80CV,
WD8OCV, WF6W, WK3P, WL7CDC, WN4BOT,

HELP

Does any member have a handbook of destructions for the Datong filter, FL2. Mine is full of baccy smoke and there could be a dry joint or three but to make things worse, I lost the brochure that came with it so am shooting in the dark. Hi. Also, does anyone have my copy of Amateur Radio Techniques. I loaned it out several years ago and there is a circuit therein which I would like to try out. Alternatively, does anyone have a copy that I can borrow please.

FINALE

It looks like we will be a little late again next month people because Bob is not returning from Australia until the latter end but by then I hope to be able to report on the happenings at the NEC. In the meantime, I am left with few chores other than new members who will receive a temporary acknowledgement and a number pending full treatment from GOFRL. Short of taking up origami therefore I hope to be spending a little more time on the bands and seeking those members who are not yet in the log. Talking of the log, Bill, GW0SGG, will be at the Swansea rally running a stand on behalf of the club. At his request, I have sent a copy of the logging programme (the modified version) and he will be distributing this together with a floppy version of the current listings.

Cheers for now folks. Keep an eye on the weather because a highly confidential report from the Met office says that there is a possibility that the sun may shine sometime during the month and it would be a pity if you should miss it. 73/88 es stay sober de Geo

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From Nancy WZ8C again:

In my continuing effort to keep FISTS informed, I thought you would like to see what Fred Maia's W5YI's No Code International is up to - here's their latest buttetin:

NOTE: No Code International is a worldwide organization that seeks to end Morse testing as a requirement for Amateur Radio operation below 30 MHz.

We have been sending out periodic bulletins to industry and the media and we have recently increased the distribution of these bulletins.

No Code International (NCI) would like to comment on the ARRL's latest license restructuring proposal.

1. The ARRL has proposed a 5 WPM "General Class" license, which they call "Class C". NCI applauds the ARRL board for making this brave decision. We'd like to encourage the ARRL's directors and membership to do more thinking in this direction.

2. No Code International stands for the elimination of the Morse code examination as a criterion for amateur licensing. We note that the ARRL has proposed a 12 WPM exam for the proposed "Class B" and "Class A"

licenses. We feel that these licenses should also require only a 5 WPM exam, and we urge the ARRL, to make that change to their proposal. This is not to say that we are opposed to the use of high speed CW on the air. We simply think it is something that amateurs should do voluntarily, and it should not stand in the way of their becoming HF operators.

3. The sole remaining reason for Morse code examinations stems from a 50 year old regulation now called "S25.5" in the International Telecommunications Union treaty which requires manual Morse proficiency to be demonstrated before a license can be issued for operation in amateur spectrum below 30 MHz. S25.5

should be struck from the treaty at the next ITU meeting. We urge the ARRL, the IARU and its member societies, and all ITU member nations and observers to work toward the elimination of S25.5 as soon as is practicable.

4. Once S25.5 is struck, Morse code examination should be eliminated entirely as a criterion for amateur licensing. We urge FCC to adopt a "sunset clause" that will immediately drop all Morse requirements for amateur licensing once S25.5 is struck. We urge ARRL and American radio amateurs to join us in this proposal.

5. Given that CW speeds over 5 WPM should be irrelevant for amateur licensing, the ARRL proposal includes one more license class than is necessary. NCI proposes a modification to the ARRL plan which would combine the ARRL's proposed "A" and "B" classes into a single Class "A" license with the combined privileges of the ARRL's proposed "A" and "B" classes, a combined written test, and a 5 WPM Morse requirement. The ARRL's proposed "C" class (entry level HF) would therefore be called Class "B" and the ARRL's proposed Class "D" (equivalent to the current Technician Class) would become Class "C".

6. We don't yet know what the FCC Notice of Proposed RuleMaking will contain. Obviously, once it's released, we will present the no code case to FCC, and we may choose to write them while they are still composing the NPRM, as the ARRL already has. You can expect us to comment on the obsolescence of all code testing, on the number of license classes, and on many other relevant issues. As authorized by the No Code International Board of Directors Fred Maia, W5YI Executive Director

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Once again, I urge you to carefully consider your remarks to the FCC. This is our opportunity to shape the future of our beloved hobby and ensure that Morse code will be here for future generations to discover. Next month I'll include detailed instructions on the proper format to get your comments read by the FCC commissioners. 73 88 Nancy Kott WZ8C, POB 47, Hadley MI 48440 (nancy@tir.com)

In the Matter of WT Docket No. 98-143 1998 Biennial Regulatory Review -- RM-9148

Amendment of Part 97 of the Commission's RM-9150 Amateur Service Rules.

RM-9196

NOTICE OF PROPOSED RULE MAKING

Adopted: July 29, 1998 Released: August 10, 1998

Comment Date: December 1, 1998 Reply Comment Date: January 15, 1999

By the Commission: Commissioner Furchtgott-Roth issuing a statement.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. We are initiating this proceeding as part of our 1998 biennial review of regulations pursuant to Section 11 of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended. Section 11 requires us to review all our regulations applicable to providers of telecommunications service and determine whether any rule is no longer in the public interest as a result of meaningful economic competition between providers of telecommunications services, and whether such regulations should be deleted or modified. In conjunction with our biennial review of regulations required under Section 11, however, we believe it is appropriate to review all of our regulations relating to administering wireless services, not just those pertaining to providers of telecommunications services, to determine which regulations can be streamlined or eliminated.

2. With this Notice of Proposed Rule Making (Notice), we commence a proceeding to examine our rules for the Amateur Radio Service in an effort to eliminate unnecessary and duplicative rules, as well as to streamline our licensing processes. We also examine streamlining initiatives for the Amateur Radio Service in addition to those already described in our proposals concerning the Universal Licensing System (ULS).

II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

3. In this Notice, we propose to modify our Amateur Radio Service rules as follows:

- o Reduce the number of license classes from 6 to 4.
- o Provide greater opportunities to volunteer examiners (VEs) to participate in the examination process.

o Eliminate Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES) licenses because the emergency communications that routinely are transmitted by RACES stations can be transmitted by primary, club or military recreation stations.

4. We seek comment on ideas for improving our enforcement processes as they relate to amateur radio.

5. We also seek comment on changes to the telegraphy requirements for the amateur radio service and to the written examinations that must be passed to qualify for an amateur radio license.

6. Finally, we dispose of various routine and repetitive petitions for rule making which concern matters on which the Commission already has acted.

III. BACKGROUND

7. Amateur radio operators engage in voluntary, noncommercial communications with other amateur operators located in the United States and in foreign countries. The Amateur Radio Service is for persons of any age who are interested in radio technique solely with a personal aim and without pecuniary interest. It presents an opportunity for self-training, intercommunication and technical investigation. Millions of amateur operators in all areas of the world communicate with each other directly or through ad hoc relay systems. They exchange messages by voice, teleprinting, telegraphy, digital packets, facsimile and television. All frequencies are shared. No frequency is assigned for the exclusive use of any amateur station. When normal communication systems have been overloaded, damaged or disrupted because a disaster has occurred, or is likely to occur, amateur operators repeatedly have provided essential communications links and facilitated relief actions on a purely voluntary basis.

8. There are currently six classes of amateur operator licenses. The higher the license class, the more expertise the licensee must demonstrate by examination and the greater the frequency privileges the amateur operator is authorized. Novice Class licensees pass a slow speed telegraphy examination and have limited frequency privileges. The Technician Class license holder may use any of seventeen frequency bands above 50 MHz. Holders of the Technician Plus Class have additional privileges in four shortwave bands, between 3-30 MHz. The General Class carries privileges in all twenty-seven amateur service bands. The privileges of an Advanced Class licensee includes 275 kHz of additional spectrum in the high frequency (HF) bands. The frequency privileges of an Amateur Extra Class includes access to an additional 175 kHz in the HF bands. The class for which each examinee is qualified is determined by the degree of skill and knowledge in operating a station that the examinee demonstrates at the examination.

9. The Amateur Radio Service rules are designed to provide emergency communications, advance radio technology, improve operator skills, enhance international goodwill, and expand the number of trained operators, technicians and electronic experts. The last major restructuring of the Amateur Radio Service rules took place in 1989. At that time, we eliminated unnecessary rules and simplified complex terminology to create a more meaningful and easy-to-use body of regulations. In view of advanced communication techniques, this is an opportune time to consider additional ways to streamline and simplify the Amateur Radio Service Rules by conforming them to contemporary technological advances in the art of radio communication.

10. Three petitions for rule making filed by The American Radio Relay League, Inc. (ARRL) are also addressed in this Notice. In RM-9148, ARRL proposes revision to the amateur service rules to provide more opportunities to VEs to prepare and administer examinations. In RM-9150, ARRL proposes amendment of the amateur service rules to create a private sector complaint procedure for resolving cases of malicious interference in the amateur service. In RM-9196, ARRL proposes amendment of the amateur service rules allowing telegraphy examination credit to examinees with a disability. The issues raised in the ARRL petitions are within the scope of this Regulatory Review and are consolidated in this proceeding.

IV. DISCUSSION

A. Number of License Classes

11. There are six classes of operator licenses in the amateur radio services. Each time that an amateur operator moves to a higher class, the VEs must prepare and administer an examination, and the Commission must process a license transaction to modify the data base and issue a license document. While we continue to believe there should be a number of license classes sufficient to encourage amateur operators to advance their skills in meaningful ways, six classes of operator licenses may be unnecessary. Reducing the number of classes of operator licenses would relieve the VEs from the tasks of preparing and administering unnecessary examinations. It would also ease the Commission's burden of providing oversight of the system and maintaining a data base of the current operator class for every amateur operator. We note that an ARRL committee recommended that the number of license classes be reduced from six to five by deleting the Novice Class and restructuring the Technician and Technician Plus Classes.

2. We have reviewed the various license classes and there appears to be an unnecessary overlap between the Novice, Technician and Technician Plus license classes. The Novice Class was established in 1951, at a time when telephony was still a common mode of radio communication in commercial, military, and marine services and applications. Currently, there are very few individuals who take the examination for the Novice Class operator license. For example, in 1997, we received only 961 applications for the Novice Class. By comparison, we received 21,416 applications for the no-code Technician Class operator license. We believe that the no-code Technician Class operator license has replaced the Novice Class operator license as the entry-level license class of choice. Therefore, we tentatively conclude that the Novice Class operator license no longer serves a significant, useful purpose and should be phased out, with the current holders of Novice Class operator licenses being grandfathered. No new Novice Class licenses would be granted, but anyone currently holding licenses would be permitted to modify or renew their licenses. In addition, Novice Class operators would be eligible for examination credit for the telegraphy requirement for any license class. We seek comment on this proposal. We also seek comment on disposition of the designated Novice bands. Currently, other

class licensees can operate within the Novice bands, but only at reduced power. Given the small number of new Novice licenses now being issued, if we were to discontinue licensing new Novices, would it be appropriate to delete the frequency limitations on Novices and the power limitations on other classes of operators using the Novice frequencies, so that Novices would continue to be limited to 200 watts output power but could operate using the Morse code anywhere within the 80, 40, 15 and 10 meter bands?

13. The only difference between the Technician and Technician Plus Classes is that a Technician Plus operator has passed a five words per minute (wpm) telegraphy examination while a Technician Class operator has not. Both Technician and Technician Plus Class licensees predominantly use FM voice and digital packet technologies on the amateur VHF and UHF bands. Yet, the VEs are burdened with preparing and administering telegraphy examinations, and the Commission is burdened with processing the resulting applications and revising the data base. We therefore propose that the Technician Plus Class be phased out. Holders of an FCC-issued Technician Class operator license granted before March 21, 1987, have previously passed the written examination required to qualify for a General Class operator license. Other Technician Plus Class operators could qualify for a General Class operator license by passing written examination Element 3(B) which consists of thirty questions on the additional privileges of a General Class operator license and the 13 or 20 wpm telegraphy examination. We seek comments on this proposal.

B. Greater Volunteer Examiner Opportunities

14. Currently, an Advanced Class operator cannot prepare or administer a telegraphy examination for an examinee

for a General Class license. Only an Amateur Extra Class licensee can administer that examination. The ARRL requested in RM-9148 that the Amateur Radio Service rules be amended to permit Advanced Class operators who are VEs to prepare and administer examinations for a General Class operator license. The ARRL argues that this is consistent with the Communications Act and will help fulfill the need for more volunteer examiners. We agree, and therefore propose to authorize Advanced Class operators to prepare and administer examinations for the General Class operator license. In addition, on our own motion, we propose to permit General Class operator licensees to prepare and administer examinations for Technician Class operator licenses. In all cases, examiners will be administering only elements which they themselves have received credit for. These proposals will benefit potential amateur service licensees by having additional volunteer examiners available for the examinations. We seek comment on these proposals.

C. RACES Station Licenses

15. The Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service (RACES) is a radio service using amateur stations for civil defense communications during periods of local, regional or national civil emergencies. No new RACES station licenses have been granted since July 14, 1980. We discontinued issuing new RACES licenses in order to conserve Commission manpower and resources. At the time of that action, there were 611 RACES licenses. Currently, there are only 249 RACES licenses.

16. We propose to phase out RACES station licenses by not renewing them. In addition, we propose to continue the status quo by not issuing any new RACES station licenses. By eliminating the RACES licenses, the Commission is taking a step which not only will conserve the Commission's financial resources, but will also eliminate licensing duplication. It should be emphasized that the same emergency communications that are now transmitted by RACES stations can continue to be transmitted by primary, club or military recreation stations. Our rules permit two types of stations to operate as part of RACES: (1) a licensed RACES station, and (2) any amateur station that has been properly registered with a civil defense organization. Thus, to engage in RACES communications, it is not necessary to have a RACES license with a separate and distinct call sign. We invite comments on this proposal.

D. Privatization of Certain Enforcement Procedures

17. Pursuant to the Communications Act, the Amateur Auxiliary is composed of amateur operators who are recruited and trained by the Commission for the purpose of detecting, on a voluntary and uncompensated basis, improper radio transmissions, conveying such information to the Commission, and issuing advisory notices to persons who apparently have violated provisions of the Communications Act relating to amateur radio or who have violated any of the rules that govern the amateur radio service. In rule making petition RM-9150, the ARRL states that amateur operators in the Amateur Auxiliary could be used to a greater advantage. ARRL proposes rule changes to establish a private sector complaint procedure that would permit the volunteers to bring complaints of malicious interference directly to the Chief Administrative Law Judge (CALJ). Upon receiving the complaint, the CALJ would determine whether the evidence submitted establishes a *prima facie* case of malicious interference. If no such case is made, the information submitted would be returned to the volunteer observer and no further action would be taken. If a *prima facie* case is made, the matter would be assigned to an Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) for further proceedings, after issuance of an Order to Show Cause by the CALJ or an ALJ. The Wireless Telecommunications Bureau (Bureau) would be made a party and have responsibility for prosecuting the case. In support of its petition, ARRL states that the procedure it advocates would improve and increase the quantity and quality of enforcement of the amateur rules and also expedite the handling of malicious interference cases.

18. We applaud the ARRL for its creative thinking about ways to improve the Commission's enforcement processes. Its specific proposal, however, appears to be inconsistent with the statutory provisions governing the role of administrative law judges. Specifically, the assignment of duties to ALJs must be consistent with their duties and responsibilities as they relate to conducting formal hearing proceedings. Accordingly, while we do not seek comment on ARRL's specific proposal, we do seek comment, consistent with the ARRL's underlying concerns, on other ideas for improving our enforcement processes as they relate to amateur radio. One possibility, for example, would be to encourage or require persons bringing complaints of interference to the Commission to include a draft order to show cause to initiate a revocation or cease and desist hearing proceeding. We also request additional comments and suggestions on how we could better utilize the services of the Amateur Auxiliary, consistent with its statutory basis.

E. Telegraphy Examination Requirements

19. Currently, three telegraphy examination elements are prepared and administered by a team of three VEs to examinees intending to obtain from the Commission an amateur operator license. The elements an examinee passes determines the class of operator license granted. In a telegraphy examination, the VEs determine the examinee's level of skill in sending and receiving text in the international Morse code. Our rules delineate three levels of skill in telegraphy, based upon the rate at which an examinee correctly receives a telegraphy message: five, thirteen and

twenty words-per-minute (wpm).

20. In the early days of amateur radio, radiotelegraphy was the primary communication mode of all radio operators, including amateurs. Testing for knowledge of Morse code telegraphy was necessary to ensure that amateurs could recognize and stay away from Government and commercial stations as well as stay clear of maritime distress messages. Today, radiotelegraphy is just one facet of many diverse modes of radiocommunication that require a technologically literate licensee. In 1990, in response to the sentiment of the amateur community, we established a codeless Technician Class operator license. In so doing, we stated that the amateur service should attract technically inclined persons. We also stated that we believed that telegraphers would be in less demand than electronics and communications experts. Therefore, we provided an entry level opportunity to otherwise qualified persons who found that telegraphy was a barrier to pursuing the purposes of the amateur service. Those purposes include encouragement and improvement of the amateur service by providing opportunities for advancing both communication and technical skills, and the expansion of the existing reservoir within the amateur radio service of trained operators, technicians and electronics experts.

21. The decreasing role of telegraphy as a communications mode also is demonstrated in our implementation of the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS). In permitting GMDSS to replace the mandatory Morse code equipment and operator, we recognized industry movement to newer and better technology for distress situations. The GMDSS relies on satellite and automated terrestrial communications systems for distress and safety communications. The Commission noted that by incorporating these advanced communications techniques into the safety system, GMDSS would significantly improve safety of life and property at sea throughout the world.

22. The international Radio Regulations (Radio Regulations) that apply to the Amateur Radio Service require that all amateurs licensed to operate below 30 MHz demonstrate their ability "to send correctly by hand and to receive correctly by ear, texts in Morse code signals." The Radio Regulations do not specify any particular speed. We note that the 1995 World Radiocommunications Conference (WRC-95) resolved that Article S25, which includes the international amateur code requirement, be considered at the 1999 WRC. Subsequently, this consideration was delayed to the WRC scheduled to be held in 2001.

23. In preparation for consideration of the code requirement at a future WRC, the ARRL surveyed amateur licensees, both members and non-members, to determine their attitudes on the Morse code requirement. Some 63 percent of ARRL members agreed that "[f]or the foreseeable future, it is important to retain the Morse code requirement in the international regulations," while 30 percent agreed that "[t]he Morse code requirement for amateur radio licensing is no longer relevant, in the international regulations." Among all amateurs, members and non-members, 57 percent favored retaining the Morse code requirement, while 35 percent regarded it as not relevant. Among ARRL members that addressed what the code speed requirement should be for full amateur privileges (Amateur Extra Class), 41 percent favored a requirement in the 10-13 wpm range, versus a minority of 32 percent who favored the current 20 wpm requirement. Based in part on these survey results, an ARRL committee proposed to reduce the General Class code speed requirement from 13 to 10 wpm, and for all code examinations to specify one out of five minutes of copy.

24. In view of changes in the technologies that amateurs use to communicate generally, and views with regard to the Morse code requirement specifically, we seek comment on all aspects of the Morse code standards used in our examinations. Do the three levels of 5, 13, and 20 wpm remain relevant to today's communications practices? Should we continue to have three different levels, or should these be reduced to one or two — and, if so, what should be the required speeds? Were we to reduce the required Morse code elements, should we add elements to the written examination to ensure a working knowledge of the newer digital technologies which, in part, are replacing the Morse code? Or, should we consider specifying the method of examining for Morse code proficiency, such as requiring fill-in-the-blank or copying one out of five minutes sent, instead of allowing VEs to determine how to test for code speed? We request comment on these and any other issues related to our code speed requirements.

25. Additionally, in RM-9196, the ARRL requests amendment of the amateur rules which allow telegraphy examination credit for the higher telegraphy speeds to examinees with a disability. Specifically, the ARRL requests that the examinee be required to attempt the higher-speed telegraphy examination before examination credit is given pursuant to a doctor's certification. In addition, the ARRL requests that volunteer-examiner coordinators (VECs) be authorized to request medical information from the certifying physician pertaining to the examinee's disability. It should be noted that these issues only remain relevant if we retain the higher telegraphy speeds requirement, since if the requirement were eliminated, a person with a disability would not have to apply for examination credit. We tentatively conclude that, if we do maintain the requirement, neither of these proposals is an appropriate means to address potential abuses of the physician certification requirement. We believe that these proposals place an unfair burden on examinees with disabilities, and raise serious privacy and confidentiality concerns. We seek comment on ARRL's proposal and our tentative conclusion.

F. Written Examinations

26. In addition, a written examination is prepared and administered to each applicant for an amateur operator license in order to demonstrate to the Commission that the examinee possesses the operational and technical qualifications required to perform properly the duties of an amateur service operator licensee. The written examination for each license class currently specifies ten general topics and the number of questions for each topic that must be asked in an examination. A uniform national database of multiple-choice questions and answers is approved by the National Conference of VECs and is periodically updated on a regular basis so that all publishers and applicants have access to current materials. This is accomplished on a purely voluntary basis, without formal Commission involvement. Determining the components of written examinations was carried over into the VE system from those components used when the Commission previously prepared and administered the examinations. In light of the fact that written examinations now have been prepared and administered under the VE system for over a decade, we seek comment on whether the written examination requirements should be modified to provide VEs and VECs additional flexibility in determining the specific contents of written examinations, on the specifics of what such flexibility should entail, and on the advantages and disadvantages to providing such flexibility.

27. Specifically, we ask commenters to address whether the general topics set forth in Section 97.503 of the Commission's Rules adequately cover the significant categories of information relevant to determining whether an applicant has the requisite operational and technical qualifications to become an amateur licensee. For example, does the current list of topics adequately cover current technology and contemporary amateur operating practices? For those commenters who suggest addition or deletion of general topics, we ask them to include the rationale underlying such proposals. In addition, we ask commenters to discuss whether the required number of questions from each general topic should continue to be established by rule. For those commenters who suggest altering the number of questions, we ask that they discuss alternative numbers or percentages and the reasons therefor. We are particularly interested in comments from VEs and VECs regarding any changes they would recommend, either individually or collectively, in the written examination requirements on the amateur community generally, as well as on the amateur examination process specifically, including how, if at all, they will affect the integrity of the examination and licensing process. For instance, we seek specific comment from VEs and VECs regarding how modifications to the written examination requirements would affect their ability to conduct examinations in an effective, efficient and expeditious manner.

G. Disposition of Rule Making Petitions

28. We have also received petitions for rule making filed by various individuals, summarized below, requesting changes to the amateur rules. The petitions concern matters on which the Commission has already taken action. In the interest of administrative efficiency, we have included such petitions in this proceeding because in all cases they do not warrant the issuance of a Notice of Proposed Rule Making and the commencement of a separate proceeding. Therefore, no rule making (RM) numbers will be assigned to these petitions. The petitioners in these cases have not presented sufficient evidence to justify altering the current operator privileges, requirements or structure of the Amateur Radio Service.

29. Mr. Spencer Ritchie petitioned for a change in frequency privileges in the 75 and 80 meter sub-bands for Amateur Extra Class licensees. In his petition, Mr. Howard Kraus requested that Q-signal suffixes, such as QRP and QST, be made available to amateur stations. His particular interest was to use a Q-signal that indicated a decrease in transmitter power so as to publicize the fact that a certain radio club promoted low-power operation. A petition filed by Mr. Henry Ruh requested that the current examination system for an amateur radio license be changed from one that is based on memorization of questions and answers to one that is based on experiential operation of an actual amateur station.

30. A petition for rule change, filed by Mr. William Houlne, called for the creation of sub-bands in the 160 meter band between 1.9 MHz and 2.0 MHz, and in the 80 meter band between 3.6 MHz and 3.7 MHz for use by holders of Technician Plus licenses. A petition filed by Mr. Rod Wheeler requested that the rules be amended to include new standards that repeaters would be required to meet and that these standards be used by frequency coordinators.

31. All of the petitions discussed in the foregoing paragraphs concern licensing requirements, operator frequency privileges or seek a restructuring of the amateur license classes. The current operator frequency privileges, structure of the license classes and the requirements for obtaining an amateur license were developed in accordance with the expressed desires of the amateur community to provide motivation for amateur operators to advance their communication and technical skills. We do not believe that sufficient evidence has been presented to justify altering the current requirements which are in accordance with the basis and purpose of the Amateur Radio Service in the United States. Therefore, we will dismiss these repetitive petitions.

32. In view of the foregoing, we propose: (1) to phase out the Novice Class operator license (current licensees grandfathered) and the Technician Plus operator license; (2) to authorize Advanced Class operators to prepare and administer examinations for the General Class operator license; and (3) to sunset RACES station licenses by not issuing any license renewals. We invite comments of the amateur community with respect to improving our enforcement processes as they relate to amateur radio. We also invite comments regarding the specific telegraphy speed requirements for the various license classes, and on ways to streamline and improve the operator examinations. The views of interested parties on these proposals are invited. The proposed rules which are appended hereto are intended to simplify and streamline the regulations that govern the Amateur Radio Service.

VI. PROCEDURAL MATTERS

Ex Parte Rules - Permit-But-Disclose Proceeding

33. This is a permit-but-disclose notice and comment rule making proceeding. Ex parte presentations are permitted, except during the Sunshine Agenda period, provided they are disclosed as provided in the Commission's Rules. See generally 47 C.F.R. §§ 1.1202, 1.1203, and 1.1206(a).

Regulatory Flexibility Act

34. We certify that the Regulatory Flexibility Act does not apply to this rule making proceeding because, if the proposed rule amendments are promulgated, there will not be a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small business entities, as defined in Section 601(3) of the Regulatory Flexibility Act. The amateur stations that are the subject of this proceeding would not be authorized to transmit any communications where the station licensee or control operator has a pecuniary interest.

Comment Date

35. Pursuant to Sections 1.415 and 1.419 of the Commission's Rules, 47 C.F.R. §§ 1.415, 1.419, interested parties may file comments on or before December 1, 1998 and reply comments on or before January 15, 1999. Comments may be filed using the Commission's Electronic Filing System (ECFS) or by filing paper copies. See Electronic Filing of Documents in Rulemaking Proceedings, 63 Fed. Reg. 24, 121 (1998).

36. Comments filed through the ECFS can be sent as an electronic file via the Internet to <<http://www.fcc.gov/e-file/ecfs.html>>. Generally, only one copy of an electronic submission must be filed. If multiple docket or rulemaking numbers appear in the caption of this proceeding, however, commenters must transmit one electronic copy of the comments to each docket or rulemaking number referenced in the caption. In completing the transmittal screen, commenters should include their full name, Postal Service mailing address, and the applicable docket or rulemaking number. Parties may also submit an electronic comment by Internet e-mail. To get filing instructions for e-mail comments, commenters should send an e-mail to ecfs@fcc.gov, and should include the following words in the body of the message, "get form <your e-mail address>." A sample form and directions will be sent in reply.

37. Parties who choose to file by paper must file an original and four copies of each filing. If more than one docket or rulemaking number appears in the caption of this proceeding, commenters must submit two additional copies for each additional docket or rulemaking number. All filings must be sent to the Commission's Secretary, Magalie Roman Salas, Office of the Secretary, Federal Communications Commission, 1919 M St., N. W., Room 222, Washington, D. C. 20554.

38. Parties who choose to file by paper should also submit their comments on diskette. These diskettes should be submitted to: MJDePont, Public Safety and Private Wireless Division, Wireless Telecommunications Bureau, Room 8332, 2025 M Street, N. W., Washington, D. C. 20554. Such a submission should be on a 3.5 inch diskette formatted in an IBM compatible format using WordPerfect 5.1 for Windows or compatible software. The diskette should be accompanied by a cover letter and should be submitted in "read only" mode. The diskette should be clearly labelled with the commenter's name, proceeding (including the lead docket number in this case, WT Docket No. 98-143), type of pleading (comment or reply comment), date of submission, and the name of the electronic file on the diskette. The label should also include the following phrase "Disk Copy - Not an Original." Each diskette should contain only one party's pleadings, preferably in a single electronic file. In addition, commenters must send diskette copies to the Commission's copy contractor, International Transcription Services, Inc., 1231 20th Street, N. W., Washington, D. C. 20037.

39. Alternative formats (computer diskette, large print, audio cassette and Braille) are available to persons with disabilities by contacting Martha Contee at (202) 418-0260, TTY (202) 418-2555, or at mcontee@fcc.gov. This Notice can also be downloaded at: <http://www.fcc.gov/dtf/>

VII. ORDERING CLAUSES

40. Accordingly, IT IS ORDERED that, pursuant to Sections 4(i) and (j), 303(r), and 403 of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended, 47 U.S.C. §§ 154(i) and (j), 303(r) and 403, notice is hereby given of the proposed amendments to Part 97 of the Commission's Rules, 47 C.F.R. Part 97, set forth in the Appendix hereto, in accordance with the proposals, discussions, and statement of issues in this Notice of Proposed Rule Making. Comments are sought on these proposals.

41. IT IS FURTHER ORDERED, that, in accordance with the reasons given herein, rule making petitions RM-9148 and RM-9150 ARE GRANTED to the extent indicated herein.

42. IT IS FURTHER ORDERED, that, in accordance with the reasons set forth above, the rule making petitions filed by Spencer Ritchie, Howard Krause, Henry Ruh, William Houlne, and Rod Wheeler ARE HEREBY DISMISSED

43. IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Commission's Office of Public Affairs, Reference Operations Division, SHALL SEND a copy of this Notice of Proposed Rule Making, including the Regulatory Flexibility Certification, to the Chief Counsel for Advocacy of the Small Business Administration.

Further Information

44. For further information, contact Maurice J. DePont, mdepont@fcc.gov, Policy and Rules Branch, Public Safety and Private Wireless Division, Wireless Telecommunications Bureau, (202) 418-0690, or call (202) 418-7233 TTY.

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

Magalie Roman Salas
Secretary



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